



**Department of Defense
and
Department of Veterans Affairs
Good News
November 2007**



Welcome to Good News. This Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) newsletter highlights the accomplishments and sharing activities at both the local and national levels.

DoD and VA Collaborate to Ensure Life-long Medical and Rehabilitative Care

DoD and VA have signed an agreement to provide "federal recovery coordinators" to seriously wounded, injured, and ill active duty service members, veterans, and their families. The federal recovery coordinators will ensure life-long medical and rehabilitative care services and other federal benefits are provided to these beneficiaries. The agreement implements one of the top recommendations of the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors, co-chaired by former Sen. Robert Dole and former Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala. The first group of federal recovery coordinators will be provided by VA in coordination with DoD and will be assigned to selected military treatment facilities throughout the nation. They will support existing military Service and veteran programs and care providers by coordinating needed services between DoD, VA, state, private and voluntary organizations, while serving as the ultimate life-long resource for wounded, ill and injured service members and their families.

VA Providers Access Battlefield Data with Bidirectional Health Information Exchange-Theater (BHIE-T)

BHIE was first implemented in 2004 to facilitate the electronic sharing of health information on patients being treated by both DoD and VA. As of October 2007, DoD is using the BHIE framework to share patient information from theater with the VA. Two months ahead of schedule, VA providers can now access theater clinical data for patients who transfer to the VA for care or evaluation. The theater clinical data includes inpatient notes, outpatient encounters, and ancillary clinical data such as pharmacy data, laboratory results, allergies and radiology reports.

DoD and VA Take Innovative Steps to Reduce Healthcare Supply Chain Costs

The DoD and VA are demonstrating leadership by collaborating in efforts to reduce unnecessary costs and improve operations in the federal healthcare supply chain. Through the innovative joint incentive fund (JIF), the DoD and VA are linking and expanding their ongoing initiatives to both standardize and synchronize product information between their hospitals and

supplier partners. The DoD and VA JIF program is important because it takes aim at a significant problem in healthcare -- inconsistent and inaccurate product information. Bad data contributes to the inefficient exchange of information in the supply chain, adding costs to an already burdened industry and potentially impacting patient safety. To support the data synchronization program, the DoD is successfully synchronizing data housed in the materials information systems of 35 military hospitals with product data from 23 supplier partners and two major distributors. To date (as of Nov. 14, 2007), the DoD has documented \$18.9 million in product price reductions, and moved \$7.9 million in 1,218 purchase order line items to e-commerce. Newer to the effort, the VA has 24 hospitals participating with more pending over the next 90 days. To learn more about how jointly synchronizing product data empowers DoD and VA hospitals to save costs and improve business processes, please see <http://www.tricare.mil/DVPCO/features.cfm>.

Federal Facility Named for Local Hero: Captain James A. Lovell, Jr., Federal Health Care Center

On October 5, a ceremony was held to announce the new name of the Great Lakes/North Chicago Federal Facility—the Captain James A. Lovell, Jr., Federal Health Care Center. Senior leadership from both DoD and VA participated. This Federal Health Care Center is scheduled to be completed in 2010 and was recently profiled in Chicago's Daily Herald. This innovative agreement between the Navy and the VA will allow treatment of newly enlisted Service members and veterans to be provided in one facility. Navy and VA staff will work side by side to provide healthcare to both VA and DoD beneficiaries. This partnership will improve the healthcare quality and provide better access to care for all federal beneficiaries in the North Chicago area.

For questions please contact the appropriate point of contact below.

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Good News is published monthly. If you have any good news stories and or accomplishments from your local teams, please send them to Crystal Coleman at crystal.coleman.ctr@tma.osd.mil and your stories may be included in a future issue of the newsletter.

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